



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

commerce: but this, like other overflowing gifts of Providence, seems to be too little regarded—the waste, indeed, in this instance, is sufficient to feed half the human race.

"It is a melancholy reflection, that from man, downwards to the smallest living creature, all are found to prey upon and devour each other. The philosophic mind, however, sees this waste of animal life again and again repaired by fresh stores ever ready to supply the void, and the great work of generation and destruction perpetually going on, and to this dispensation of an all-wise Providence, so interesting to humanity, bows in awful silence.

"In returning from these digressions to the subject of the present inquiry, let the imagination picture to itself countless multitudes of birds, wafted, like the clouds, around the globe, which in ceaseless revolutions turns its convexities to and from the sun, causing thereby a perpetual succession of day and night, summer and winter, and these migrators will be seen to follow its course, and to traverse both hemispheres from pole to pole. To those who, contemplating this world of wonders, extend their views beyond the common gropings of mankind, it will appear that Nature, ever provident that no part of her empire should be unoccupied, has peopled it with creatures of various kinds, and filled every corner of it with animation. To follow her into all her recesses would be an endless task; but so far as these have been explored, every step is marked with pleasantness; and while the reflecting mind, habituated to move in its proper sphere, breaks through the trammels of pride, and removes the films of ignorance, it soars with clearer views towards perfection, and adores that infinite wisdom which appointed and governs the unerring course of all things.

"Thus, the men
Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself
Hold converse; grow familiar, day by day,
With his conceptions; act upon his plan;
And form to his the relish of their souls."—*Akenside*.

THE PELICAN.*

The family of swimming birds to which the pelicans give name is distinguished from all the other subdivisions of that order by the extension of the membrane connecting the three anterior toes in such a manner as to include the posterior also, which is thus brought forward as it were into the same series with the rest. The birds of this family consequently offer the most perfect examples of a completely webbed foot.

In the true pelicans the bill is of great length, broad in proportion, flattened from above downwards, and perfectly straight, with the exception of a slight hook at the middle point of the upper mandible; the edges of both mandibles are entire, being perfectly free from denticulations; and the lower is formed of two long slender flexible branches, united together only at the tip, and having the intermediate space occupied by a widely dilatable membranous pouch, which extends for some distance down the fore part of the neck. The middle part of the upper mandible forms a slight projection, bounded on either side by a narrow groove, in which, near the base of the bill, are situated the almost imperceptible nostrils; the eyes are surrounded by a naked space continuous with the base of the bill; the neck is rather long; the body large; the legs short, and naked above the knee; and the wings of moderate length, with the first quill-feathers the longest. The tongue is so short, as to have been entirely overlooked by the earlier writers.

The white or common pelican is, as the first of these names implies, almost entirely white when in its adult state. The quill-feathers, however, which are scarcely visible when the wings are closed, are black; and the whole plumage, as the bird advances in age, exhibits a slight tinge of flesh-colour, which is sometimes mixed with a shade of light yellow.

When fully grown, the common pelican is almost the largest bird of its order, measuring from five to six feet from the extremity of its long bill to the tip of its rounded

tail, and from ten to twelve in the expanse of its wings. The extent of these latter organs, together with the extreme lightness of the bony structure, (which is capable of receiving a large quantity of air,) enables the bird to soar to a very considerable height, and to remain long upon the wing. Its bill, frequently sixteen or eighteen inches in length, and two or even more in breadth, has but little strength; but the fish on which it preys are immediately consigned to its pouch, in which it speedily accumulates a sufficient store to serve it for a meal, and then retires to some neighbouring rock to satisfy its voracity, which is by no means trifling, from the contents of its wallet. This part is so highly distensible, as to be capable of containing from two to three gallons of water. It serves also as a reservoir for the food which the old birds bring home to their young, and which they disgorge into the throats of the latter by pressing the bill upon the breast; an action that has given rise to the fable of the pelican feeding its young with its blood. In the same manner the males supply the wants of the females when sitting.

The white pelicans nest in rocks on the shores of the sea, of large rivers, and of lakes, in almost every part of the old world, excepting the most northern regions. Buffon gives a curious account of the manner in which they sometimes act in concert when in pursuit of their finny prey. They form themselves into a circular line, and when they have thus encompassed a shoal of fishes, suddenly plunge into the water, seize upon their victims, fill their pouches with the spoil, and fly to the land, where they devour it at their leisure. This fact is confirmed by some late observations of M. Roulin upon an American species. The latter adds, that when a single pelican is in search of food, it wheels round and round at the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and as soon as it perceives a fish, darts upon it from above with inconceivable rapidity, displacing the water around it for a considerable distance. Should it fail in its attack, which rarely happens, it rises again to repeat the same manœuvre.

In captivity the pelicans, like most of the swimming birds, are perfectly contented, harmless, and familiar. Their flesh is said to be far from palatable.

The specimen in the collection at the Dublin Zoological Gardens struck the sail of a vessel in the Dardanelles during a fog, and fell stunned upon the deck; it was brought home by the captain, and purchased from him for the Society.

THE WHALE FISHERY—CAPTAIN ROSS.

For many years a great change has been taking place in the habits of those stupendous creatures which draw the enterprise of the merchants and mariners of England and Scotland into the Arctic seas. When the fishery commenced, they were so tame that they were found floating in all the gulfs and bays of Spitzbergen, fearless of harm, and were taken by hundreds, and without an effort. In a few years, however, this dreadful destruction drove them to the more remote bays, from whence they were soon driven into the open sea, far away from land. But the trackless ocean afforded them no shelter from their enemies; they were pursued, and that with so much resolution, that the Dutch alone are calculated to have destroyed upwards of fifty thousand in no very long course of years. Retiring before their ruthless pursuers, they next took refuge along the line of perpetual ice, which was their habit when Scoresby wrote his celebrated work. Here as many as fourteen hundred of them were killed in one year. At last, worn out by perpetual persecution, they have plunged into the regions of eternal ice, where the boldest whaler dares not pursue them. The consequence is, that the Greenland Fishery, which was formerly carried on in the sea between Greenland and Spitzbergen, is nearly abandoned, and the whole trade would soon have been at an end, if Ross had not penetrated in his first voyage through the mass of ice which renders the entrance to Baffin's bay so hazardous, and opened to the whalers vast seas never before fished in, and which the monsters of the deep are found to frequent in great numbers. The most northern part of Baffin's bay, together

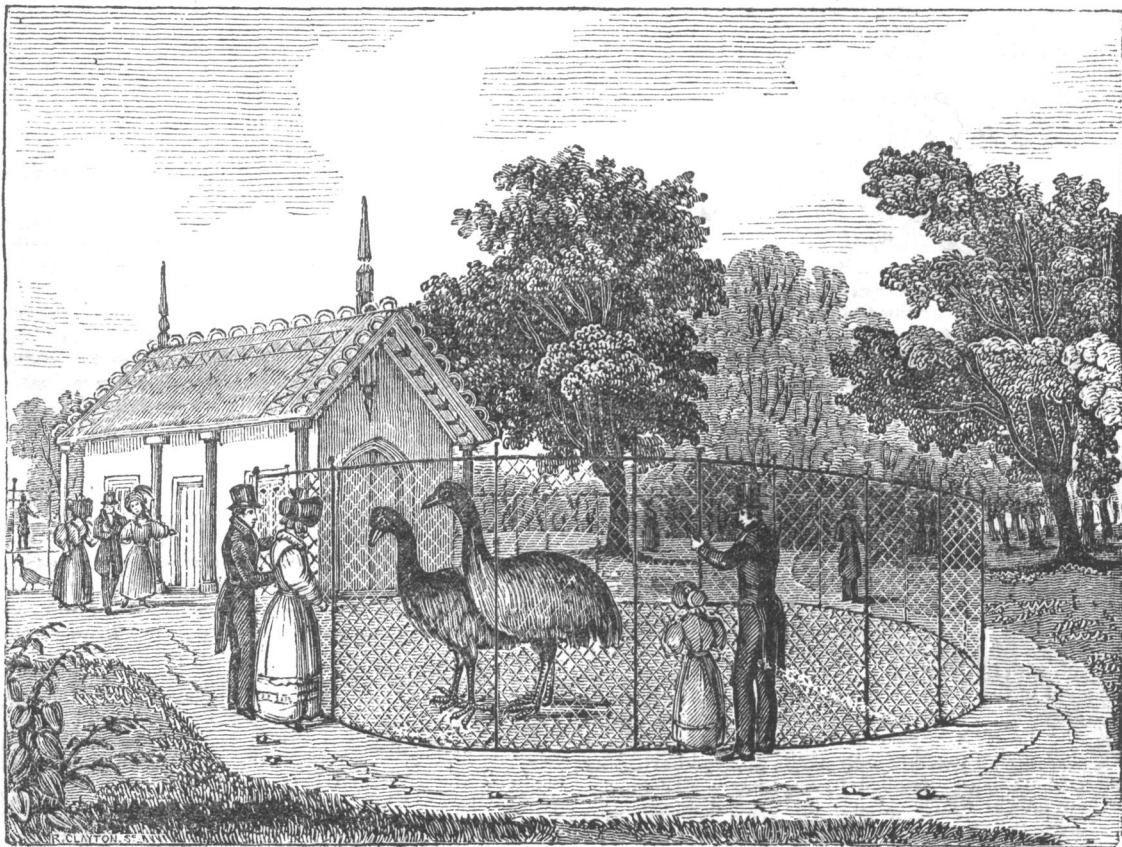
* See engraving in our first page.

with the Lancaster Sound, Regent's Inlet, &c., are now the great fishing stations, and all these regions have been discovered, or at least laid down with accuracy, by the recent navigators, who opened the route to the less adventurous traders—showed them that the seas abounded with whales—broke the icy barrier, which had never been passed since the days of Baffin, and described the coasts and harbours so correctly as to deprive the voyage of the greater part of its perils.

ANECDOTE OF A RAVEN.

In the days of Tiberius Cæsar, a young raven that had been hatched in a nest upon the temple of Castor and Pollux, took her first flight into a shoemaker's shop just opposite. The master of the booth was well pleased to receive the guest, especially as it had come from so sacred a place, and took great care of it. In a short time the winged visiter began to speak, and every morning flew to the top of the rostra, where, turning to the open forum,

he saluted the emperor, and after him Germanicus and Drusus, the young princes, each by his name, and after them the people that passed by. This he continued to do for many years, till another shoemaker, either envying his neighbour the possession of so rare a prize, or enraged at the bird for muting on his shoes, killed him. At this rash proceeding the people were so indignant, that they drove the ungenerous mechanic out of the street, and afterwards murdered him. The body of the raven was solemnly interred in a field two miles from the city, to which it was carried by two blacks, with musicians playing before, and a great crowd following. In such esteem, says Pliny, did the people of Rome hold this wit and aptness to learn in a bird, that they thought it a sufficient cause for ordering a sumptuous funeral, and even for putting a man to death, in that very city where many brave and noble persons have died without having their obsequies solemnized, and which afforded not one individual to revenge the undeserved death of the renowned Scipio Æmilianus, after he had conquered both Carthage and Numantia.



THE CASSOWARY.

The cassowary, though not so large as the emu, which is still less than the ostrich* in size and appearance, yet seems more bulky to the eye, its body being nearly equal, and its neck and legs much thicker and stronger in proportion; this conformation gives it an air of strength or force, which the fierceness and singularity of its countenance conspire to render formidable. It is five feet and a half long from the point of the bill to the extremity of the claws. The legs are two feet and a half high from the belly to the end of the claws. The head and neck together are a foot and a half; and the largest toe, including the claw, is five inches long. The claw alone of the least toe is three inches and a half in length. The wing is so small that it does not appear, it being hid under the feathers of the back. In other birds, a part of the feathers serve for flight, and are different from those that serve for mere covering; but in the cassowary all the

feathers are of the same kind, and outwardly of the same colour. The part, however, which most distinguishes this animal, is the head; which, though small like that of an ostrich, does not fail to inspire some degree of terror.

Appearing formed for a life of hostility, for terrifying others, and for its own defence, it might be expected that the cassowary was one of the most fierce and terrible animals of the creation. But nothing is so opposite to its natural character—nothing so different from the life it is contented to lead. It never attacks others; and instead of the bill, when attacked, it rather makes use of its legs, and kicks like a horse, or runs against its pursuer, beating him down, and treads him to the ground.

The manner of going of this animal is not less extraordinary than its appearance. Instead of going directly forward, it seems to kick up behind with one leg, and then making a bound onward with the other, it goes with such velocity, that the swiftest racer would be left far behind.

The cassowary is as remarkable for its voraciousness as

* See description in the 52d Number of our Journal.